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Some of the Best Illinois High School Prose of 1947

Selected by CHARLES W. ROBERTS
University of Illinois

Foreword

THE compiler of this collection of student writing must admit that he has not been able to examine all of the best compositions produced in all Illinois high schools in the last year. He trusts that the selection he has made from the material submitted is representative of what is being done by the better students in schools throughout the state. It is his earnest hope that teachers and students will accept the challenge which this issue offers and will resolve now to be represented in next year's anthology. All contributions should be addressed to *Illinois English Bulletin*, 204a Lincoln Hall, Urbana, Illinois. Each manuscript should bear the name of the author, his graduating class numeral, the name of his high school, and the name of his English teacher. No manuscripts will be returned unless they are accompanied by return postage.

Additional copies of this issue are available at ten cents a copy in orders of ten or more mailed to one address. Teachers and students of composition will find detailed discussion of the contents interesting and profitable.

C. W. R.

Snow and New Light

Have you ever felt as if you've been taken down a notch or two? I was going to school in California, and I had built for myself a throne of superiority. I was the "know-it-all" kid. There wasn't a thing I didn't know, and the world had grown dull and uninteresting.

One day, while the sun glimmered from a rather hazy sky, I was eating lunch. A question was directed at me, so simple a question I was startled for a moment. Imagine me, "the big wheel," startled. "Snow?" I said. "Well, it's wet stuff and it's real white. Sometimes it's nice and then again it's cold."

Imagine a person never seeing snow! It was fantastic to me since I came from a place where snow is just as common as—well, as the wind and rain and flowers in spring. But here was a boy who asked, "Would you please tell me just what snow is, and what it feels like?"

I was dumbfounded. I thought long and hard before I answered. It was the first time I had thought about anything but myself for a long time. Me, of all people, thinking about "flowers in spring"! Then I thought about other things too. I thought about walking on a cold, nippy night with the snow crunching, crackling beneath my feet, about looking up into the sky and letting the soft flakes of white kiss my face, and about watching the stars later still, silent, as if frozen in the calmness of the night.

The boy's eyes looked into mine for the bit of information he sought so earnestly and sincerely. "Sometimes it's dry and flaky," I went on, "and when you see it falling it's like little bits of the stars that have been peeled off." The bewildered look did not fade from his face, and then I knew I could not tell him what one can know only through experience.

That started me thinking again. Yes, there was more to the world than myself, and it didn't revolve around me either. I tried hard to answer him by saying, "Snow can be fierce and active as a cow's tail in fly time, and it can be miserably wet and uncomfortable."

He shrugged his shoulders and repeated, "Gee! I wish I could see snow for myself."

From then on I have looked at the world in a different light. The uninteresting and boring universe has been replaced by a happier and more livable one. The world is made not only of

geometric figures, government, politics, but it is snow and rain; it's the thinking and understanding of the cares and fears of others.

—ROGER HARMON '50

East High School, Rockford

Adele Johnson, teacher

Charity Begins at Home

"Feed Starving Europe" is not a new slogan we are hearing; we've heard it for quite a few years now. We know the people are starved, but what about the people in our own country? What are we going to do about them? There are people right here in America whose stomachs have been yearning for food for years. Can't we feed our starving people first, before Europe's?

To illustrate my case, I'd like to tell you of a little old woman I observed in Peoria. A worn face, with a leather-like skin, and protruding lips, emerged from an old black scarf that protected dirty white hair. She was walking the streets the first time I saw her; then the next time she drew my attention, she was standing at a drinking fountain rinsing off something. She aroused my curiosity, and I continued to watch her. As she finished rinsing these small particles, I know not what they were, she proceeded to eat them. The last was a bright orange sucker. I could picture in my mind the small child that had dropped it and then started to pick it up, but her mother had said, "No, Honey. That's dirty. Leave that one there, and we'll go get another. Come, don't cry now. You'll get another orange one."

But this old woman had no money to purchase another. She hadn't even had the money to buy that one. She had picked it up from the street, glad to get such a sweet delicacy.

Licking the sucker, she carefully picked her way along the gutter, head bent low, so as not to miss anything that might stave off that gnawing feeling in her stomach.

Can't we help such people as these in America first, and then feed Europe's starving?

—JOYCE CHAMPION '48

Pekin High School

Bernice W. Falkin, teacher

Darkness

The scientific explanation of darkness is the absence of light. It is as simple as that, but that does not give a complete picture.

When I was small, the only darkness I knew was the inky blackness that hovered around my bed at night. And I feared it. With my eyes shut tight and the covers pulled over my head, I could see demons, monsters, and boogey-men popping out of the black around me.

As I grew older I knew there were no such things in the darkness; they were figments of my imagination. I said to myself that the darkness was nothing to be afraid of.

Now I realize the real darkness in the world. And now I fear the darkness in the world more than ever. It can destroy the world in little time. It is the cause of all disputes between big men and small men, between large nations and small nations. This darkness is not the absence of light but the absence of wisdom and understanding. This weapon put in the hands of a man like Hitler would be more destructive than the atom bomb.

We must make war on this enemy and completely destroy him, or he will destroy us. We must launch a crusade of education, starting in our own back yard and reaching to the ignorant and illiterate everywhere. Nations must learn the ways of other men. Then and only then, when all these things have been done, will we have peace on this earth.

—GEORGE BRISTOW '48

DeKalb Township High School

Bertha M. Rutledge, teacher

UNESCO

"You ain't heard nothing yet!" With such words, the great Al Jolson used to begin his act. Too, these might be the words of *Unesco*, as it rolls up its sleeves to begin its almost overwhelming but magnificent task. That undertaking is none other than to eliminate ignorance through education of all the people of the world.

Unesco stands for "United Nations, Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization". The idea behind the organization is an ideal that is centuries old, but one which has never been given a fair chance. No, our "realistic" world laughed it off as ultra-idealistic.

For centuries the world, too, has tried to banish its Creator, but it has failed. The Creator will not fail; neither will the ideals and truths He has implanted in the human heart fail. Now one of these fundamental truths is that all mankind is bound together through common ideals, common hopes, and common desires. And this amounts to nothing more—nor less—than the Christian doctrine of the brotherhood of man.

Unesco believes that all men seek peace. All wish to abolish wars. Further, says *Unesco*, if ignorance is done away with, understanding and peace among nations will inevitably follow. Misunderstanding is the cause of wars, it maintains, and it proceeds to establish the belief that if nations can come together, exchange scientific and cultural ideas, become acquainted, and get to know and understand one another, peace will inevitably ensue.

The fireworks set off by this modernized idea in the form of *Unesco* began last November at Paris. It has been exploding ever since. The world, however, is far too little aware of cultural explosions; yet scholars and educators have united and they hope to blow the crust of ignorance and prejudice off the earth; they would give men everywhere a chance to know one another.

None of the delegates to Paris were particularly optimistic about this first meeting. They feared that it might be destined to go the way of all past international attempts at peace. But these people—educators and scholars—have surprised everyone—including possibly themselves—by making that momentous meeting an eminent success.

Each delegate showed in his speeches that he wished to foist no special philosophy on the world. Each professed deep belief that there could be cooperation by all, without anyone sacrificing his national or religious principles. Then the committees of *Unesco* went forward, and to the wonder of all, they limited themselves to a small but practical program for the coming year. *Unesco's* president, Julian Hurley, was elected; a budget was set up; and there was almost unanimous agreement on all important questions.

Now what has *Unesco* done? What can we do? Already *Unesco* has begun to carry out its program. First, it has set up the International Theatre Institute, which all nations may join. The purpose of this work is to circulate to all national groups information concerning plays and dramas of all nations. Second, *Unesco* has been active in the student exchange plan. For years colleges and universities have exchanged students and teachers. That is to be greatly extended. Too, we high school students may soon be

invited to take part in exchange life. Be ready! You may yet get an invitation to study in a foreign land. This is an ideal way to ensure interchange of ideas.

Third, *Unesco* is trying to supply scientists all over the world with the equipment they so badly need. Much has been lost or destroyed by war! *Unesco* is fostering the wider production and distribution of films, and the universal use of newspapers and radios. It is working to bring nations to provide better educational facilities for all their people. Finally it is striving to break down international barriers set up by such things as visas, high customs, duties, and high tariffs. If the mere listing of these projects makes you sit back and gasp, think of what carrying them out is doing to the leaders of *Unesco*. And what can we high school students do? Much! Study foreign languages, read books of other nations, join student letter exchanges, send school supplies, as well as food and clothing, to suffering students and teachers in war torn lands.

Such intellectual projects are needed because intellectual development has suffered more than anything else during the last war. The men most able to educate the world were the men who underwent the most tragedy in World War II. They either had to teach the philosophy of dictators or suffer imprisonment and even death. The minds of youth also suffered because of their having learned wholly false doctrines. Now they must be reeducated. In fact, civilization almost has to be rebuilt, and this can be done only by organized effort and definite plans of action, by education and culture. Such plans must not be limited by barriers of nationalism. For these very reasons was an international organization for education, science and culture set up. That is *Unesco*.

—EDITH STROM '47

Mercy High School, Chicago

Sister Mary Attracta RSM, teacher

At the Circus

There is some inexplicable fascination about the circus that continues to attract millions of Americans year after year. Just as the sophisticated adolescent decides that there is no further thrill to be derived from seeing another circus, he finds himself yearning to go again. Indeed, this great show that annually tours the United States brings fun and excitement to the young and old alike. The youngsters revel in the sheer joy of it; but the adults go to enjoy the young, for theirs is the satisfaction of seeing their children thrill to things that they themselves have often delighted in.

The specific cause of this fascination over young and old is hard to explain. I think it is the circus atmosphere we like so much—the smell of sawdust and animals, the roar of the lions, and the blare of the circus band. Of course, the animals come in for a large proportion of attention, as do the sad-faced clowns.

On the other hand, the act that continues to fascinate me the most is the aerial performance in the Big Top. The startling leaps and dives of the trapeze artists give a never-to-be-forgotten thrill. As they go through their dizzying actions, my eyes seem riveted upon them; and I cannot look away until they are swinging gracefully from the comparative safety of the trapeze.

But of all the acts, even in the Big Top, that of the blindfolded tight-rope walker has me completely hypnotized. His fate is not known in a second, nor is his act soon through. Here is suspense. As he inches cautiously along, with his balancing stick before him, his friend at the end of the rope reassuringly urges him on. Suspended high in mid-air, with a thin piece of rope between him and destruction, he keeps walking steadily on, with only a voice to guide him. Completely unaware of the people around me, I stare in open-mouthed wonder at the tawdry melodrama before me; but have I not gained breadth of human understanding through the sharing of common emotions?

—PHYLLIS NELSON '47

West High School, Rockford
Lois Dilley, teacher

The Menace

In the last fifty years a new institution has slowly wormed its way into the American scene. Its subtle effect is slowly bringing about a degeneration of our people. National insanity rates are rising, and our mental hospitals are becoming more and more overcrowded. Divorce rates are at an all time high; juvenile delinquency is a major problem of the nation.

Many authorities have proposed theories to explain this seeming deterioration of American ideals and the American way of life. They cite the sex differential, the aging population, wars, depressions, the Dust Bowl, the Lost Generation, or any one of a number of reasons to explain this change in our national make-up. It is my conviction that America's plight today is due directly to a national sense of frustration developed by the ever-growing use of the *questionnaire*.

The questionnaire has come into popular use only in the last fifty years. It has evolved from the original simple form to a complex, unintelligible Frankenstein, which has given the American people a great national inferiority complex.

It is time, I think, that we began to study the background of the questionnaire and the tactics it employs.

Every questionnaire starts with one simple question which every person should be able to answer. It is, and I quote, "Name." Now it would appear to the casual observer that there is nothing in one's name which would make writing it in a space a frightening thing. But let's give the thing a suspicious second look. Take a simple name such as John William Smith. That one name can be written John William Smith, John W. Smith, John Smith, J. W. Smith, or J. William Smith. Still further, the name can be either signed, printed, or typed.

After a few of these simple questions, the questionnaire shifts to the "Button-button-who-has-the-answer?" type. For instance, give your wt. in lb. and your ht. in ft., in., and cm. Give the tw., cnty., and ste. of your birth. In what mnth. and yr. were you brn.? How many pple. are in your fmly.? Ar you sngl. or mrrd.? Name the schls. you have attnd. since scnd. grde. The onl. trbl. with ths. srt. of thng. is tht. snr. or ltr., the pr. gy. who ha. trd. to fill it out is lbl. to go brsrk.

As we pursue the subject further, it becomes more and more obvious that to fill out a typical information blank one must be (1) a college graduate with majors in foreign language, political

economy, psychology, and business management; (2) the owner of a well-developed photographic memory with a Dunninger twist; and (3) a cool-headed character so devoid of subconscious difficulties that Freud himself would give up in disgust.

Still, if questionnaires were confined to the mere facts of personal information, it is possible that they could be tolerated. The average man, if given six months of time and a complete file of diaries, school annuals, the *Reader's Digest*, newspapers, and photographic albums, could probably figure out the answer to such intriguing questions as: "On the average, how many pairs of shoes do you wear out in a ten-year period?" or "How large was your vocabulary at the end of your first semester of kindergarten?" However, the misguided geniuses who write questionnaires seem to feel it is necessary to get a complete picture of a man's psychological background. This leads, in time, to such queries as: "Have you stopped beating your wife?" or "Give an evaluation of the Malthusian theory in ten words or less." In connection with this sort of question, there is one famous question which has, at one time or another, baffled every person who has ever tried to fill out a questionnaire. It is: "Why?"

The danger of the modern questionnaire lies in the fact that it looks relatively innocent at the first glance. When Honest, Hard-Working Americans realize that even the simplest questions are but traps for the unwary, something is lost—something vital is gone forever: this vital thing is the mind of the Honest, Hard-Working American. It is this feature of the modern questionnaire which forms a very real threat to our national sanity.

Today, as the questionnaire marches relentlessly on, America is slowly and feebly tottering toward the brink of national disaster. The time for action has come. Every citizen who is worth his weight in pebbles must rise to the banner of anti-questionnairism. Write your congressman—write the newspapers—write the President—write your mother-in-law!

Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your brains!

—HAROLD R. HARDING '47

Lyons Township H. S., LaGrange
Norma Jordan, teacher

I Like 'em

So they're campaigning now to eradicate our "unsightly" roadside signs and billboards, are they? Well, I challenge them to try. There may be a handful of ancient fuddy-duddies who protest that highway advertisements are hideous eye-sores detracting from the beauty of the scenery, but I like 'em. And I will fight to the bitter end for their preservation! What's a great deal more, I'm willing to wager that the majority of the American public will agree with me. Why, these outdoor oracles are an American institution.

Any traveler finds the lovely panorama of the countryside becoming a bit monotonous after a few hundred miles of picturesque pigs, weathered farm shacks, and tarnished cities. The roadside signs are the only things that prevent one from sinking into a hopeless lethargy. They are a delightful diversion in countless ways. For instance, you are crawling along the road on a sultry summer afternoon with the heat and dust grinding into you when, suddenly, you come upon that old familiar, "Drink ———, The Pause that Refreshes!" You instantly snap out of the semi-coma into which you have dropped, your efficiency increases, and you glide along joyfully restored by a mere fleeting sign! Perhaps the case is reversed. The wind beats with an unmannerly fist on the windshield and then throws slushy sleet at you. Naturally the car radiator obstinately refuses to radiate, and your aristocratic proboscis, although it turns the color of fire, remains at sub-icicle temperature. Then there materializes a friendly billboard. It's a bit battered, but the jolly old Sol in the left hand corner glows in a friendly fashion while the ultra bathing beauties dip daintily in the rippling waters of "Wonderful Wonderland Lake." Ah, it's heartening just to glimpse this evanescent sight.

One dare not slight the nostalgic, though tattered, posters of long departed circuses, which recall many poignant memories. Moreover, I condemn any crabbed character who dares venture a protest against that handsome creature one encounters at all-too-rare intervals blowing real smoke rings.

The recreation that wayside advertising offers is limitless. My favorite pastime when traveling is to choose teams and, with my companions, vie for honors in the frequency with which one spots the lovely maiden smoking that Camel she hiked for as opposed to the courtly Raleigh gentleman.

A traveler's interest in the surrounding region is stimulated immeasurably by those proud posters flaunting the advantages of each passing village before his envious eyes. "You are now entering

Centerville—cleanest little city in the Midwest,” they declare. Or, “Only two hundred yards to Blanktown city limits—George Washington’s horse drank a bucket of water here!” Ah, yes, one accumulates many facts from billboards. However, the names on some are even quainter. One of my favorites is a huge sign which commands haughtily, “Stop at the Spink (how I love that word!) Wawassee Hotel—It’s the Best.”

It’s easy to observe that I’m really billboard batty, isn’t it? Yet in all fairness, I admit that billboard posters do deteriorate and lie shattered and spiritless from sheer neglect. Rather than witness this deplorable demise, I would allow billboards to be banished from our fair land. But never, never wrest from their vantage points the little signs! It is these little signs that really inspire a weary traveler. They are truly incomparable. They range from pert, exciting little epistles which command, ‘EAT AT JOE’S’ “Only 100 feet”—“Only 75 feet”—“Only 50 feet”—“Only”—(you know the kind) to angry little evangelists which bang back and forth with, “ARE YOU SAVED?” on one side and, “THE WAGES OF SIN ARE DEATH!” emblazoned on the other, accompanied by a few significant and colorful tongues of flame. These latter signs always give me a shuddery feeling, but I must admire the pluck with which they face a callous world.

This concluding paragraph I have reserved for my superspecial favorites, the true elite bards of all signs. These petite paragons of pure poetry combine all the humor and pathos of the American way of life. They are the Burma Shave signs! From a lengthy list of masterpieces I have chosen the following gem. I can only say of it that the Immortal Bard may well turn in his grave with anxiety over his diminishing popularity in view of its greater appeal.

MANY A WOLF
IS NEVER LET IN
BECAUSE OF THE HAIR
ON HIS
CHINNY CHINNY CHIN
USE BURMA SHAVE!

Yes, I like roadside signs. How about you?

—JOAN FOSTER '48
Maine Township H. S., Park Ridge
Anne Lauterbach, teacher

An Interview with Saul Alinsky

"All kids are alike when born, whether their parents are descendants of the Mayflower's passengers or criminals," said Saul Alinsky, president of the Industrial Areas Foundation Incorporated, when interviewed concerning his work in criminology and slum clearance. "It's their environment, opportunities, and upbringing that make them different," he continued.

Black-haired, blue-eyed Alinsky is known throughout the country for his outstanding work in criminology and slum clearance with his Industrial Areas Foundation. Author of the best seller, *Reveille for Radicals*, in which he lays before the people the problems and solutions for the erasure of slums and crime, he bases his working theories on study, research, and experience.

Born of a poor family, Alinsky lived his boyhood years on the west side of Chicago in a slum district. His social life was centered in and around a group of neighborhood juvenile delinquents.

"We could never see the sense of putting a penny in a peanut machine to get a handful of peanuts when we could break it open and get all the peanuts," he recalled.

Alinsky said he hasn't a doubt that he would have gone on to "bigger and better crime" had his father not become wealthy. With wealth came a change from the rat-infested slums to a stimulating and healthful environment in California. Given the opportunity to see how the other half lives, Alinsky said he rapidly readjusted his whole perspective and attitude toward life.

His new companions were interested in tennis and other sports and were not particularly taken with petty vandalism. His main interest in high school, he recalls, was aeronautical engineering.

He finally moved with his family back to Chicago, but certainly under different conditions than when the family had previously lived there. He had money, a car, even flying lessons. He entered the University of Chicago and studied archaeology.

This era ended with the depression. Alinsky found himself without any money, and his meals began to consist of whatever Stop and Shop happened to be offering in free samples each day. Despite adverse conditions, however, he continued his education and, having switched to the study of criminology, he was awarded a graduate fellowship in his senior year.

Believing that to be a really successful criminologist one must know criminals and their mental processes, Alinsky joined Al Capone's gang as an observer. Although he belonged to the gang only in a scientific capacity, the men never resented him, for he

was careful never to condemn them or moralize. He acted as best man at their weddings and as pall bearer at their funerals.

However, after two years with the gang, he realized that prevention of crime must begin with the children, and he joined the "Forty-two" gang to see what made them tick. This gang at one time was responsible for 84 per cent of the automobile thefts in Chicago. He learned from close association with these youthful and hardened criminals that the difference between criminals and law-abiding citizens is one of attitude and thought processes caused usually by environments in which this attitude and way of thinking often mean the difference between surviving and not surviving.

Alinsky's research and association with gangs of criminals made him rank at an early age as one of the ten top criminologists in the United States. He was invaluable in his work as state criminologist at the state penitentiary in Joliet.

"If you want to do something about crime," said Alinsky, "you must do something about its basic causes—economic insecurity, unemployment, malnutrition, disease, and bad physical environment."

And because he wanted to do something about crime before it got started, he organized the Back of Yards Neighborhood Council, with Bishop Bernard J. Shar, formerly of the state department, and Joe Meegan, a resident and leader of the Back of the Yards. These men have done much to bring democracy and a decent way of life to the people of Chicago's "Packing town," one of the worst slum districts in this country.

"Active, participating people are the life blood of democracy," Alinsky believes, and to this end he and his colleagues have organized representative bodies made up of all races, creeds, and colors, to work out their own mutual problems. As a result, disease, juvenile delinquency, and social hatred, the foundations of crime, are beginning to disappear and a working democracy is beginning to emerge. "These people no longer feel left out as part of the country," Alinsky declared.

Alinsky's work is not confined to Chicago and Illinois, however, for his Industrial Areas Foundation is sponsoring programs similar to the one in Chicago in such cities as Kansas City, Mo., Cleveland, Ohio, St. Paul, and Minneapolis, Minn.

—GEORGIA DEWEY '47
York Community H. S., Elmhurst
Eleanor A. Davis, teacher

Foreboding

As I walked down the hall that Thursday morning, I felt fine. Even though it was a gloomy day outside, I felt as if I were standing on top of the world. Everything was grand, everyone was good. The reason for my exuberance—I had all my lessons for the day prepared.

But somehow, as I walked down the hall, the fact slowly penetrated my benevolent mood that all was not as it should be. (I say benevolent, because as I walked down the hall, I lavishly bestowed cheerful "Hello's" and warm smiles upon one and all—almost all, anyway!) Anyway, I slowly became aware of the fact that all was not as it should be. Lockers slammed shut with a crash and thud! A book fell.

What was so unusual about this? An outsider would have thought all was as it should be, but, ordinarily, all commonplace sounds would have been drowned out by the loud buzz of conversation. This morning, however, no groups stood in the hall chattering noisily about dates, tests, or discussing the latest gossip. No loud greetings answered my cheery "Howdy-do's"; instead, I was the recipient of—dazzling smiles? No!! Smiles that looked as if their owners had plastered them on! Smiles that were sort of sickly; you know, the variety that is given when the owner is sick at his stomach. Smiles that were fleeting; that is, they were gone before they had time to blossom fully, and some of them were not even allowed to bud! Dazed eyes looked after me with pity in their depths as if to ask, "Doesn't she know? Guess not or she wouldn't be so darned cheerful."

Slowly a mood of foreboding took the place of my exuberant one. My "Ili-there's" grew a little strained. "Here!" said I to myself, "this has gone far enough! Find out what they're so gloomy about."

So, bravely, I marched up to Peggy and said, "Peg, what's up? This place is about as lively as a tomb, and all the kids look like zombies!"

She looked at me with sad, mournful eyes, leaned over and whispered into my ear. "Oh!" I said, with a return of my former spirits. "It mustn't be very bad then, because they were wonderful last year."

She looked at me, gave me a pitying sigh and said, "Go and get yours from Miss Dean." Then she turned back to her locker.

So, I thought to myself, "That's just what I'll do!" Then I turned and proceeded gayly down the hall to Miss Dean's room.

However, by the time I had reached Miss Dean's room my gay spirits had gone on a little trip—down to my boots! (Literally it was my oxford tops, of course.) But I grimly caught hold of them and proceeded to yank them back up to their former level. Oops! there they go again! Try as I would, however, they just wouldn't stay up. The battle soon grew to be *too* one-sided, so hanging onto my spirits with one hand, I knocked on the door of Room IX with the other. What a knock! It started out to be a big, determined knock; but, instead it turned out to be a very gentle one. I guess maybe it wasn't even a knock. It was just an undeveloped, anemic tap. I chided myself not so very gently, and then a voice I imagined to be sepulchral said, "Come in." With trembling knees I obeyed. The door squeaked as I slowly pushed it open. For a moment I thought I was in the "Inner Sanctum." This fear was soon dispelled, for Miss Dean looked up with her usual friendly smile and spoke. "Hello, Faye," she said.

"Hello, Miss Dean," I answered with a lack of enthusiasm and a tremor in my voice I hoped sincerely that she did not notice. I asked, "May I have mine, please?"

"Yes, certainly," she said with a quick smile. "Here you are. Now don't forget to turn in one of them in the next few days."

I said, "Thank *You*," politely and walked out.

Outside the door, I raised them slowly; involuntarily my hand flew to my eyes. "No!" I whispered, "it can't be." Slowly two fingers separated, leaving space for one scared eye to look out at the sight. The eye was soon covered again and in the flash of an instant I knew why the students had those dazed faces and glazed eyes. We had received the pictures that were to be put in the annual.

They were positively hideous. We looked like a prize bunch of convicts or fools. We looked like anything but humans. Oh, woe was us!

Now I understood why no groups gathered, no gossip, no friendly, cheerful smiles. This then was what had taken the pep out of life. We had come upon ourselves as we really looked—in our worst moments.

—FAYE FRASHIER '49
Carmi Twp. High School
Pauline Harper, teacher

A Teen-Ager Tees Off

My most thrilling moment in golf was one I shall never forget even if I should live to be a hundred years old.

The feeling experienced during that moment cannot be described but I knew that it was a very decisive second in my life and that it would never come again. It happened last summer in the first round matches of the Illinois women's state golf tournament. During this split second I trembled on the brink between triumph and defeat.

On the first day of the competition we played to determine who would qualify in the championship flight which consisted of 16 players shooting the lowest scores on that day. The medalist or person with the fewest strokes shot a 79. I came in with a very unspectacular 84, which put me in eighth or ninth place. I did not know or care which, since I was very happy that I had even qualified in the championship flight.

One thing was certain though: the competition would be terrific no matter whom I played the next day unless I was unusually lucky. I did not worry about it too much that evening because I kept thinking that the streak of Irish luck I had inherited from my father's side of the family would bring me good luck along with the rabbit's foot, four-leaf clover and horseshoe which I carried in my golf bag, plus the pennies in my shoes so that I would draw an opponent who was not too impregnable.

Therefore, it came as a great shock to me when one of the players entered the dining room while mother, a friend, and I were eating dinner and announced that I was to play the medalist in the morning. All of us turned white as we choked on our meals and nearly fainted. This was one prospect that I had not counted on. With trembling hands I took the pennies out of my shoes and tossed them into the wastebasket along with the horseshoe, four-leaf clover and rabbit's foot, which had suddenly become very disgusting to me.

Mother tried in vain to console me by saying, "Now, dear, the bigger they come the harder they can fall." But all I could mumble was, "Yes, mother, but on whom do they fall?" I spent a sleepless night and a breakfastless morning.

Feeling quite ill on the way to the country club I was somewhat relieved when I met my opponent and found that she was not much bigger than I, but I was still as nervous as a cat when I stepped up in the tee to make my first drive. I took a big swing and the ball

popped practically straight up into the air. Mother and Zibby were definitely alarmed, to say the least, but, strange as it may seem, the moment I walked off the tee I felt calm, which all went to show I was too dumb to know what I was getting into.

To my amazement my second shot dropped on the green and I two-putted for a four while the medalist made a five, giving me the first hole. After that, the rest of the first nine holes remain hazy. I only remember that at the end of eleven holes I was five up on my terrifying opponent. How or why I do not know. I suddenly woke up to the fact that I was winning. This was the first time I had stopped to think about it, and for some reason it scared me stiff. I became so nervous that I lost five consecutive holes.

At the end of our scheduled match of eighteen holes my rival and I were all even. This meant an extra hole to decide the winner. I knew this was life or death, and one little slip would be my finish. I was asked if I would care to rest a few minutes, but the suspense was terrible and I said, "Let us go on and get it over with."

The medalist drove first and had a nice drive. Then I stepped up, numb with fear, and shot, landing slightly back of her. As I walked up to my ball I asked my caddy, who had been advising me all the way around, which club I should use for my next shot. He stopped dead cold and I could hear his knees knocking together as he said, "I don't know. It's up to you now." I finally decided on my club and hit the ball. It landed on the edge of the green and bounced off. My opponent was also short of the green. We both approached and had about 12-foot putts left.

My rival shot first and missed hers—now it was all up to me. If I could only sink that putt! I carefully lined it up and then stroked the ball. I could not bear to watch it so I turned around and covered my eyes listening for it to drop or miss. The seconds it took that ball to reach the hole seemed like an eternity. There was a deathly silence; I waited; then KLUNK! The ball was in the hole and I had won.

That moment in which I heard the ball drop in the cup was, without a doubt, the most thrilling moment in my life.

—MARY RILEY '48
Bloomington High School
Lorraine Kraft, teacher

Please Send Us A Mummy

Jean and I were nine years old. A year before we had been content to play with jacks and jig-saw puzzles, but this year we sought more worldly entertainment. We had filled five scrapbooks with "movie stars" before we hit upon a really exciting leisure activity, that of sending away for free samples. When Jean and I became enthusiastic over something, we really went into it wholeheartedly. Before long we had two and a half cigar boxes full of shampoo, lipstick, rouge, and hair-tint samples, along with recipe books and interior-decorating pamphlets.

One night, as we made out penny postcards to send to advertisers in a new *Good Housekeeping*, we listened to Inner Sanctum, a very eerie radio program. The story seemed so realistic, even to us who had heard a good many tales of horror, that we sat enthralled as we heard victim after victim fall beneath the terrible cunning of an Egyptian mummy. The narrator ended with this cheerful thought: "If you happen to find an old ghost lying around your closet, send it to us and we'll send you a 5,000 year-old mummy. Ha! Ha! Ha! Pleasant dreams!" The chimes of station identification broke the spell, and I turned off the radio.

The thought was in both our minds, but it was Jean who finally said, "I wonder what would happen if we sent in for a mummy."

The lack of a ghost didn't bother us at all. We merely drew a picture of a ghost, hid it in my closet, and "found" it the next day. Jean had a toy typewriter, and we wrote the most business-like business letter that two fourth-graders were able to write.

Dear Sirs,

I heard your program about the mummy and I want it. I found the gost in the closet in this letter and so please send me the mummy. I live at 47i5 North Albemarle street arlington Virginia.

Yours Truly,
Jean Louise Barry

We thought our new idea a marvelous one, and there was always that sliver of hope that they might really send a mummy. Suppose they actually had a mummy, and we were the only people in the United States to send in for it! Maybe we could have a show and charge admission to see it.

Every day we would hurry home from school to see whether an answer had come, but it never had. We had almost given up hope when something finally arrived—a long white business envelope and, joy of joys, a package! It was a very small package, but by the time we had taken our prize up to the seclusion of Jean's room, we had decided that they might have sent the ear of a mummy. Saving the best for last, we opened the letter first.

Dear Miss Barry,

We are glad that you take pleasure in our radio program, but you must remember that it is entirely fictitious. We are sorry that this has not been made clear. We hope that you will continue to enjoy our programs in the future with the realization that they are not to be taken seriously but are merely for entertainment.

Under separate cover we have sent you a box of Carter's Little Liver Pills with the compliments of our sponsor.

Yours truly,
American Broadcasting Studios

—CAROLINE FRASER '48
Lyons Township High School, LaGrange
Dorles Parshall, teacher

The Boss

"Yes, ma'am. I'm sure you're right. The girl just made a mistake." Pete, the manager of the grocery store, soothed the customer's aroused feelings and gave her a credit slip.

"It's easier than arguing with her," he explained, his eyes darting nervously around the store. Was everything peaceful? He twisted his fingers until the knuckles were white. There was so much to do that he didn't know where to begin; he just stood and thought about all that had to be done.

"Pete!" The scream practically lifted him off the floor. He hustled toward the front of the store where the cash registers stood in a row. What could be the trouble?

"I need some pennies." "I'll take quarters and dimes." "Are there some singles there?" Great heavens! Couldn't his checkers say please?

"Sure, sure," said Pete, looking more harassed than ever. "Right away."

"Aren't there any fifties in the back room?" In grocery business the largest paper bag into which the customer's purchases are juggled is the fifty pound bag. The second is the twenty-five and then comes the sixteen, which holds approximately one loaf of bread and a small head of lettuce.

"I'm awfully sorry," Pete apologized. "There aren't any."

"And no twenty-fives either?" the girl asked.

Pete seemed to shrink three sizes. Other stores had bags piled to the ceiling he knew. "I'll call the office. I'll make a big fuss," and he disappeared in the direction of the telephone. Anything to keep them quiet!

"This is the manager at Central," he told the office. "I'd like a few bags if you can spare me some." The store was in desperate need of bags. Why didn't he say so? But he might lose his job if he got hard to get along with. "You'll send some as usual next week? That's fine." What would his checkers say to that? No bags all week! He shuddered at the thought.

"No, ma'am, they aren't making oat meal any more." Maybe that would hold her; maybe she wouldn't bother him now. He'd forgotten to order the oat meal; then he hated to inconvenience by calling in the middle of the week. They never paid much attention to him anyway. Maybe he should be more demanding.

His wife would yell if he didn't bring home that cottage cheese. He hated cottage cheese, but eating it was easier than explaining. He reflected as he slipped the carton into the bag.

"Pete, this case of peas won't go on the shelf." If they'd only use their heads! But the boys might quit if he complained too much. High school help was certainly incompetent, but what could you do? He hated to fire anyone. Besides, it was tough to break the new ones in.

Walking towards him was the Tip Top Bread man. He'd be wanting a better display spot for those cakes, and Pete had already given Wonder Bread the only good place.

Pete ducked into the wash-room. Why had he ever gone into this business anyway? It was unceasing war . . . and he hated to fight.

—BETTE LOU SEATON '48
Evanston Township High School
Edith M. Lackey, teacher

A New Book

Jan always played a game the first thing in the morning. When she woke up, she would pick out the weather that the day would bring. This morning, she decided, would be nice and sunny.

Jan did not hear her mother up yet, so she lay in bed thinking about her birthday party. It had been just five days ago, but to Jan it had been a long time. The party was wonderful as Jan had known it would be. The cake was white with a pink "Happy Birthday" that had stood up on top. She liked her birthday dress very much. It was pink, cold and slick to the touch, and had white around the collar and the sleeves. Jan thought hard. What kind of material did mother say the dress was made of? Oh yes, Jan remembered, she had said silk, pink silk.

Mother came down the hall to Jan's room then and Jan jumped out of bed to greet her. Mother helped Jan dress. Jan could do some of it by herself now, if mother had put the things where Jan could find them. She still had a tiny bit of trouble with buttons and could not do shoes at all.

Then came breakfast. Just as mother and Jan were all through, Mary, the girl next door who took Jan to school, was waiting. Mary had a lot to tell Jan this morning. She told Jan about the birds that came to be fed at her feeding station each morning, what they looked like, how big they were, what each one ate, and how many there had been. Mary would sometimes describe a house that she saw or a tree or a flower she had seen. Jan, in turn, would tell her about her school, what they did there, what she had learned the day before, what her teacher said, and other things that happened to her.

Just as Jan arrived the bell rang. Jan hurried to her room and slipped into her assigned seat. The very first thing that morning, the teacher gave them books. These books were different from any that Jan had ever had. Then as the teacher went on to explain, Jan said the word over and over to herself, "Braille, I am learning to read Braille."

—EDWINA DUNCAN '48
Decatur High School
Lois Yoder, teacher

Fair as a Star

She was always 'Miss Lucy' to me and to countless others—from the moment I first met her to my last farewell to her, asleep among the beautiful flowers and close to her beloved pianos. What was it that gave her that eternal spirit of youth so that she always retained that first title, after her marriage and through the many happy years she spent in our community, guiding first the mothers and then their children in turn in the study of piano?

She had the soul of an artist who loved music and was gifted in being able to express that love. The simplest little song in my beginner's book became something beautiful and alive when Miss Lucy played it. One of her earliest admonitions to me was, "Make the keys sing"; and as I look back now that was what *she* did. All the raw material in the shape of boys and girls, some talented, some not, some eager to learn, and others unwilling but brought by proud mamas, she received alike and endeavored to awake a response, a singing sound, instead of a flat mechanical one.

Miss Lucy's music was wonderful—on both piano and organ—and doubly so, because she shared her talent so generously. Any noted vocalist or visiting artist could call on Miss Lucy to be accompanist, and the many beautiful things they said about her skillful work were pleasant to her ears. Yet, she was very modest, slipping into large assemblies to play accompaniments and out again to go back to her own busy schedules.

It was my good fortune to have Miss Lucy as my first Sunday school teacher, and learn Sunday school songs she played, also participating in Children's Day exercises which had her musical supervision. At our little brick church services, we often marched out to her music on the pipe organ, or heard her beautiful preludes. If Miss Lucy left us nothing else but her example of sharing and of service to others, it would be enough.

She gave us much through her recitals. Yes, recitals are much the same—any recital gives you a chance to dress up, appear before an audience, etc. But Miss Lucy was always discovering a charming little voice, and a song for that voice, even a little rhythm band to add interest, and countless ways to bring out hidden possibilities and change a fearful ordeal into a big event.

We remember with pride Miss Lucy's loving care of her little mother and her fondness for their large family. She had a very affectionate nature that included all her students, and it was with much sorrow that we learned Miss Lucy wasn't going to get well last spring. How could Miss Lucy leave us? She was eternal!

It seems strange that in my sketch of Miss Lucy I haven't mentioned her personal appearance. She wasn't plain. Yet, was she beautiful? Yes, I believe she was. Although she didn't live unknown, her name was Lucy, and I am reminded of Wordsworth's "She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways"—

"—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!"

—JO ANNE EADES '47
Petersburg High School
Mina Terry, teacher

Gentle Lady

One of the most fascinating characters in Shakespeare's drama *Macbeth* is Macbeth's wife. At least two interpretations of her nature are conceivable. One depicts her as hard, ruthless, and cold; as a fiend who ruined her husband's life; as a woman wicked through and through; as a schemer. It is easy to see how she might appear to be this way on the surface, but, judging from certain lines and actions, I believe that Shakespeare meant her to be not *hard*, but *strong*. I like to think of her as a great lady, strong-willed, deeply loving her husband, and doing the things that she thought would help him. Later then, she weakens and becomes so remorseful for her part in the crimes that she is driven to insanity and suicide.

Like her husband, Lady Macbeth had one fatal weakness, "vaulting ambition," but her ambition was not for herself but for Macbeth. So anxious was she that he secure "the golden round" that she worked him into a state of mind brave enough and hardened enough to murder Duncan. It was not easy for her to do this because she was not, by nature, cruel. This is revealed in her prayer—"Come you spirits that tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, and fill me from the crown to the toe top—full of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood; stop up the access and passage to remorse."

She planned to do the deed herself as we see by the words "my keen knife," but later she says, "What cannot *you and I* perform upon . . . Duncan?" and finally, as Macbeth himself does the deed, she confesses, "Had he (Duncan) not resembled my father as he slept, I had done't." No real fiend could have had this change of heart, this softening of will.

I am convinced that Lady Macbeth's reasons for wanting Macbeth to be king were unselfish; she loved him and wanted him to be happy. Her love for him and his for her is a thing of beauty throughout the play. No matter how much each was suffering, they managed to keep their love steady, and at no time did either one blame the other for what had happened, which would have been the most human thing to do. She, especially, never once stopped encouraging and heartening her husband even when they knew that their downfall was inevitable.

Immediately after the crime, Lady Macbeth felt the first pangs of regret and began to weaken, outwardly and inwardly. This was demonstrated the next morning when she fainted after hearing a description of the murder room—I believe that she really collapsed, not merely feigned it; again, when she said to herself "Nought's had, all's spent, where our desire is got without content: 'tis safer to be that which we destroy than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy." The next minute Macbeth enters and her mood seems to change immediately. Now her sentiment is, "Things without all remedy should be without regard: what's done is done" and "Come on; gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks, be bright and jovial among your guests tonight." She contradicts her words with her actions, however, for that night at the banquet, she remains apart from the guests and eats by herself on the dais, because she cannot bear the strain of acting natural. This again shows that she was strong only in helping Macbeth.

In the scene where Macbeth almost gives himself away in fright at seeing Banquo's ghost, instead of scolding and accusing him after the guests have gone, Lady Macbeth tries to comfort her husband. Here again her great love for him shows through.

In the most powerful and tragic scene in the play, the sleep-walking scene, we see the final step in Lady Macbeth's complete downfall. Haggard and worn from restless nights, the beautiful queen enters the room carrying a lighted taper and tries desperately to wash her hands of the blood stains that she sees there in imagination. Her speech "What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?—Yet who would have thought the

old man to have had so much blood in him," shows two things. First it shows that she is still trying to convince herself and her husband that they are safe, even though they both know that she is wrong. The second sentence tragically shows her in a true light—soft and afraid. She sighs and although we do not read the sigh, we know that it is one of utter sorrow and complete anguish, for the gentlewoman says, "What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged."

Then in her final speech of the play she says, "To bed, to bed! there's knocking at the gate: come, come, come, come, *give me your hand*. What's done cannot be undone—To bed, to bed, to bed!" How fitting that the last words we hear her speak are words of love and devotion!

We do not see nor hear Lady Macbeth again, but she has one final action—suicide. This cannot really be considered in an analysis of her character because she did it when she was completely mad. Nevertheless, it is there and it lends the final tragic touch to a great tragic character.

—BARBARA BROWNE '48
University H. S., Normal
Ruth Stroud, teacher

Art—A Lost Art

I settled myself easily in a big armchair to read a magazine. I flipped through several pages not finding anything of particular interest until I ran across an article on painting. "Painting is the solution for man's leisure hours," said the article. "We all have some artistic talents," it went on to say. "So take your brush in hand and delve into the joys of art. But," it warned, "do not, under any circumstances, start with water colors; oils are easier and your results will be much better."

In view of the fact that I hold great reverence for the printed page, the next day found me wandering forlornly in an art shop. While I was leaning across the counter purchasing some paints, an old man entered the store carrying a canvas under one arm. He was dressed very shabbily and had not had a haircut in months. "Golly," I thought, "I surely hope art doesn't do that to everyone." But, having recently studied heredity in biology, I took encouragement in the thought that perhaps his genes had gotten

a little mixed up. "Cosmic rays," I mused, as I started home. "Poor man."

I slept fitfully that night, waiting impatiently for dawn to arrive so I could start my future masterpiece. The next day in the gray light of early morning, I stood beside the easel and, clutching the brush firmly in my right hand, I dipped it into the palette and shakingly applied some paint to the canvas. Hardly daring to breathe, I completed the stroke and stood back to survey it.

It was really an exceptional stroke, not just because I made it. It was unique in its own peculiar way. The color was a rather grayish, greenish, bluish white and settled in a large brush-marked blob in bold relief upon the canvas. As I completed more strokes with the rays of genius practically radiating about my head, I came to the conclusion that I really should decide just what I was attempting to paint. This was my first mistake in a long series of mistakes.

It took a great deal of time to conceive of a subject that could possibly have a grayish, greenish, bluish-white cast to it. But after much thought and careful consideration I arrived at what I assumed to be a brilliant conclusion. An ocean scene appeared the answer to all of my difficulties. The fact that I had never seen an ocean had no effect upon my decision.

As soon as the finishing touches had been put on the splashing surf, I carefully covered the canvas and called the family around to witness the unveiling. When they had all gathered and were panting with curiosity, I dramatically swept aside the covering. They all looked very hard at my picture.

"Remarkable," said Mother.

"Amazing," agreed Father.

"I think it's pretty good myself," I said. All my fears that perhaps I wasn't a junior Rembrandt were quickly dispelled. At that moment I felt like Leonardo da Vinci and Van Gogh rolled into one. The *Mona Lisa* seemed mere child's play. I could even visualize the world bowing at my feet.

"Now," I said, feeling that I could dare anything, "do you know what it is?"

Father walked closer to my painting, backed up, surveyed the situation carefully, and scratched his head. Mother went through the same procedure and sighed. The silence was becoming embarrassing; so Father, feeling that somebody had to do something, took the situation in hand.

"A mud pie," he exclaimed with finality.

The expression on my face must have been one of hurt surprise. Then Mother rose to the situation.

"The inside of a storm cloud?" she offered timidly.

I felt that the end had come. But it was Aunt Mabel who saved the day.

"I think it's water," she said.

"How did you ever guess?" I asked, thinking that perhaps some hope remained.

"Why, what else would have a sea gull flying over it?" she answered with pride.

"That is not a sea gull," I said slowly, trying to control my temper. "It's a rock."

With that, I picked up my painting and stormed out of the room, vowing never again to display my artistic endeavors before such an unappreciative audience.

But by this time I was fairly certain that something was amiss with my ocean scene. I had descended in several minutes from da Vinci to just plain me. What was amiss, I found out later, was the brilliant pink sky which leered at the onlooker from between the predominantly green waves. It was an established fact by that time that I was partly color-blind and had plunged my brush into the pink paint instead of the blue. I guess that fate had not decreed that I should be an artist!

Does any one wish to purchase a fine set of paints with only the pink and green slightly used?

—ROBERT SWEET '47

Maine Township H. S., Park Ridge
Anne Lauterbach, teacher

First Prom

The breeze is soft — coolish — warm — pleasant. It has just rained. It is fun not having the screen up. She can lie in her window. Rain is a fresh soothing thing. The green things below have that rich pungent odor that comes after a soft May rain. Somehow the night is sad. The breeze blows on her face, and all the lights are out. Rain is a great healer, but it would take more than rain. "It always seems to rain at just the most inopportune time! Now my hair will be straight as a—just awful!" The breeze is soft—drying. It's a big price. Of course, life's that way. There is some poor consolation to be found in that she is but one of many. Girls don't think that way though. Up in her window, she is alone. Waiting. There had been a lot of waiting—waiting at the locker, waiting at lunch—waiting for the phone—waiting—waiting for the phone to ring. Now, waiting for tiredness to well up—waiting for sleep tonight. Of course, there is next year. But girls don't think that way. The decorations were very nice. "Quite the nicest I've seen in three years of proms. Yes, three years." And the hair was all right. The girl in the window—indeed, there was more than one girl watching night from her window. The prom—waiting—wonderful—monstrously hideous. Wonderful—but it wrecks its price!—and the price is paid in human pain—girls are stoic—they really get a liberal education—in high school. That rain is cool. "Dear, you'll catch cold—Dear!" "We have three couples in that little car—we're simply crushed." And four hundred girls would have gone in a dog cart. You can feel the plants and flowers and grass grow as they draw the water from the ground. The wind dies as the rain comes. "Dear, you'll catch cold,—is something bothering you?—Well, all right." The cars stand about the curb—glistening and clean—lots of work put in on those cars, and rain makes them glisten in the street lights. Big night. Some of the girls had their hair in sterile white babushkas. On this day not a sign of slovenliness—more a badge. They had looked like drenched squirrels with their hair tight against their heads. Too many heads were pretty—unburdened. They knew the odds were against them—one hundred and fifty out of maybe eight, nine hundred, maybe. But girls don't think much about odds. They hope, rather believe, oh, how they hope, and don't worry much about the odds. Of course, really it is all over a week or so before. It is, or isn't. But they just go on hoping—maybe sort of happy—in hoping. But more probably they know, know that they will watch the rain from the window, when they find themselves hoping with a week to

go. "Isn't this the most monstrous corsage you ever saw? Honestly, I feel just like a-a-horse. What'am I going to do?"—And the orchestra will start to play, the gauzy net forcing the sound down from the ropes and curtains; and with the soft, slow music reverberating among first-tuxes and first-formals, everybody looked to see who sat at home. Of course, some few girls always know that they have nothing to worry about. Some few girls never watch the warm spring rain from an open window, and wonder. And, presumably, there are those who never have the will, the courage, the wherewithal to hope. For then one risks—chances hoping, one wagers—and too often stakes are high, and the odds against one. One hundred and fifty out of maybe eight or nine hundred. But they just don't do us much good up there in the window. "Dear, is something the matter?"—The same thing all over, the wind stops, or dies down, and the rain starts. Then the rain sort of dies down, and the wind. . . . About ten or so the moon begins to leer from among the clouds—the wind is in the southwest, and the window faces west, out over a group of lilacs—lilacs are just approaching their prime. "The weather man says clear and warm, but it always seems to rain at the most inopportune times. I can just imagine my hair!"—The grand march begins, with the underclassmen carefully grouped away from the observant chaperones. The punch isn't bad, and only three first-formals are torn—the lilacs smell nice, but lilacs are mute—their sweetness always mocking. And the sky is almost clear. The moon hangs over the shimmering suburban housetops, hangs like a jewel on the jeweler's velvet. "He gave her some brooch of his grandmother's right in the corsage box."—And everyone begins to wonder how to get out before twelve, as they are not supposed to. Sort of an anti-climax—sort of. "Darling, are you feeling sorry about that silly dance?"—Parents at times are entirely out of reach—reach of comprehension of the perspective of their offspring. And the rain drips from branches, and it looks as if it were still raining in the clear, clean puddles. "We'll have a nice party, dear. How would you like that?"

—CHARLES FRYE '48

J. Sterling Morton H. S., Cicero
M. A. Diez, teacher

The Pit Pony

There is an old legend in England that from midnight on Christmas Eve till 3:00 on Christmas morning all the animals in the world can speak as humans do, because the animals in the stable where Christ was born first recognized the Lord. This is the story of a little boy who found the legend true.

Back in the 19th century, when coal was discovered under the farms and pastures of the Rhondda valley, collieries began to spring up like the dragon's teeth changing the face of the valley from green to black. Industrialists put their fortunes into coal, and four-year-old children went down to work in the mines.

It was in one of these mines that a little boy now slept. Above him on the face of the world housewives hurried home with hams and plum puddings. A knot of boys shuffled along the main street, singing, their coat collars turned up to keep out the bitter wind. It blew down from the hills, pushing before it the voices of the Methodist choir singers at rehearsal. Sounds of shouts, laughter and a political argument issued from "The White Stag" down the street.

But the only sound in the mine was the silence. It fell everywhere and touched everything.

Rhys stirred and sat up. No matter how wide he opened his sleep-heavy eyes, all he saw was blackness. Suddenly terrified, he tried to remember where he was. Slowly his memory came back. He had been put on the six to four shift that morning with his big brother, Davy. It had been almost time to quit work he figured when he had lain down against a shaft pillar, exhausted. In the distance he had heard the cage doors closing, but he was too tired to stir and must have fallen asleep.

Now he sat bolt upright and tried to estimate the time that had elapsed. This was impossible in the darkness and emptiness. Then he remembered with an aching heart that it was Christmas Eve, perhaps Christmas Day. The mines would be shut all day, and he would have to spend Christmas alone in hunger and in darkness. In all probability no one would even be searching for him. His mother, father and two other brothers had been killed in a mine cave-in. Davy was the only remaining member of his family, and most likely Davy was at The White Stag and wouldn't even miss him.

A veteran tram-pusher at eight, Rhys had never been alone in a mine before. There had always been the unsteady flicker of

lanterns, the steady chip-chipping of the picks. He had always been surrounded by the sounds of low voices, of the trams rolling down the tracks and the gentle neighing of the little pit ponies.

Now in the stillness, the tears ran down his blackened cheeks, hot and bitter, and his hands shook with fear. Somewhere in the mine his brothers lay.

Up on the earth the midnight service in the chapel was letting out, and the chimes were striking in the morning.

Down in the mine came a familiar sound. Rhys listened. Quite near him came the thudding of small hoofs. Someone must have left the stable door unlocked, and one of the ponies had wandered out.

Then a strange and unexplainable air of excitement ran through the mine like a gust of wind, and in the distance he heard the high babble of many voices.

Then at his elbow a small, gentle voice said, "Don't be afraid. If you will put your hand on my neck, I'll lead you to the cage. Then, should anyone come down, he will be sure to find you."

Rhys turned. At his side stood one of the ponies, the one to whom he had given apples. For a moment the boy was stunned. Then he remembered the old legend. That explained everything.

In the darkness he saw the pony's blind eyes. They were blue-grey and shining. Before, they had had a gentle, sleepy look. Now they had a strange light in them, as though the pony could see farther than men.

Rhys put a grateful hand on the pony's warm withers, and together they walked through the dark. For what seemed ages and ages they walked. Rhys had lost all sense of direction, but the pony walked surely and leisurely on.

"Now we are near the shaft," said the pony, "I will wait with you till someone comes. Thank you for the apples."

Then far above they heard a noise in the shaft and a moment later a lantern threw a fitful glare revealing Mr. Morgan, the pump engineer, and Rhys' brother Davy. They had missed him after all. Davy called, "Rhys, Rhysbach," then saw him. A moment afterwards Rhys was on his brother's shoulder.

He turned to thank his friend and saw the pony standing with his head bent down, his forehead touching a wall. The light had gone out of his eyes, and when a whinney echoed through the walls from far off, the pony whinnied back. Up on the hill the bells

chimed three, and Rhys, giving a last look at the little blind pony walking slowly into the darkness of the mine, went up to the light of the world.

—MARY PIERCE '49
Evanston High School
Ardene Stephens, teacher

A Boy Never Knows

Everyone had seen him skate farther and farther out onto the ice. The more alert ones had even heard it snap beneath his seventeen year old weight, but a surprisingly small number had actually seen him go beneath the water's surface.

When Sid felt himself being sucked down into the blue coldness below the emerald green of upper ice, it seemed to him a new experience, one that he would tell at home that evening, or an adventure he would write about. He'd write a story about a boy like himself who fell into the water while ice skating, but this boy wouldn't survive. He'd die. That'd make a good story.

One mittened hand grasped the edge of the ice, but so wet was it that his hand slipped out; only the mitten remained, frozen to the edge of the ice.

His face had been hot from the exertion of skating, and the water seemed at once cool and paralyzing to his senses. The sensation was the same as when his girl had put her fingers on his cheeks as he kissed her last night. It felt soothing. He was very tired.

He kept remembering the kiss. Lois' lipstick was called cherry something-or-other, and he had thought it had tasted like cherries. That girl was a dream. She moved warmly through his life, lighting it with a flash of color here and there, allowing him to taste and then lose.

Her eyes were friendly and sparkling. You seemed lost in them when you looked at her up close.

But Lois was painfully dumb. She didn't observe as he'd like her to. Her math was more accurate than his, but her letters and notes seemed mechanical, and her speech was absorbed with hackneyed phrases. "That's swell, Sid." "I like you lots, Hon." Though, when Lois said things like that, the words belonged singularly to her.

He supposed he loved her.

The skater had to meet his girl at five. They were going to a dinner party, rather jazzed up for high school appreciation. There'd be dancing, he supposed. He and Lois loved to dance. He'd heard that they were having turkey with plenty of dressing and gravy.

After that, the older folks would clear out, and the youngsters would take over. Hundreds of guys would bring their girls, and they'd have cigarettes and cokes after the parents went to the movies.

Sid would make a sensation this evening when he'd tell the gang about falling through the ice. The guys would laugh and call him clumsy. Gals would probably listen while he paced his story with many gesticulations. That would make Lois jealous, if she saw fit to be capable of jealousy.

He'd have to get the car for night, in case anyone wanted hamburgers about eleven o'clock. He'd ask Mom about wearing the new sport jacket. He'd call Lois and ask her how she's spent the Saturday vacation.

His head came up with a sharp crack against the ice, and he fought for air. The water became a sinister dark, and his eyes hurt from searching through the azure light. All above him was light. Some of the guys or maybe the caretaker would come soon.

Strangely, it seemed hours that he'd been below the water, yet he hadn't touched bottom. His six feet of broomstick length would nearly have reached the sand. Numbly, he sensed his shoe skates dragging him downward. He screamed.

"HMMMMMbbbblllbbbbb," answered the water. That was absurd. No one would hear him, even if he yelled as loudly as possible. He saw his courage wane as he sank down again and the water closed over his head.

His mother certainly would be surprised to hear how close he'd been to death. She'd probably race with him up to his room, peel off the sodden sweaters, overalls, and sweat socks, and rub him down with one of the family's most cherished Cannon towels, feeling fresh, warm, and soft to his body. Mother would dry him as she had when he was little, just out of his afternoon bath.

He'd stand there and laugh and say, "I'm all right, Mom. I'm not going to catch cold. I came home as soon as I got out of the water."

Mother wouldn't say anything. She rarely did, for Father ruled in that capacity. But Mom would shake her head, and her feather cut hair-do would rustle. She'd look up at him, and there'd

be tears in her eyes. Sid knew she loved him. It would hurt her cruelly if he drowned.

Father wasn't easy to live with; he had never shown interest in his son, except to scold and frighten him when he was young.

Father didn't come home often any more. His patient wife wracked his insides, taunted him with her sweetness. She never had said that she hated her husband, but Father knew it just the same, and so did Sid.

"Dad will probably beat hell out of me for this," he thought. Of course, his father did not force bodily punishment on the body of his nearly grown son, but then, there was always the car. He'd have to depend on Mom to get the car for him.

His father's son was of aesthetic mind, certain expressive talent, and, hence, effeminate in his father's eyes. His piano lessons had been stopped when the boy began to show promise. Sid would NOT be a pansy. When he was young, he had been sent to camp every summer, even though he would rather have stayed at home.

Father even encouraged him to omit evening homework in order that he might work out in the Y. M. gym. He had been taken off the yearbook staff at school so that he could stay among the benchwarmers on the baseball team.

Sid was never good at sports. His usually graceful body galloped, stumbled, and refused to bend beneath training rules, and he often played badly. So, he rarely played at all. Father was on the Board at school. Hence, Sid stayed on the team.

But even Father had been proud when Sid had sent one of his research themes from English class to a magazine and had got \$25 for the effort. All the men at his father's office had seen the boy's name in print and read the article, almost professional in approach.

Just now, Mother seemed particularly close to him. She had taught him all the music he knew after the lessons stopped. Chopin's "Polonaise in A Minor," Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata," part of the "Warsaw Concerto." No jazz. Purely classic stuff. Music, at least, was a comfort.

Suddenly he was afraid to leave Life and Beauty. They both walk together, his mother said.

He didn't know whether it was late or not. Anyway, he'd better be getting home.

Light smashed his realization, then faded. Again his head smacked the ice. Up for the second time. He heard voices, but he couldn't yell. Flailing his arms, he groped and twisted, but he

moved nowhere. His heart pounded inside his plaid shirt. His throat was parched; he wanted a drink of water.

Funny, "Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink."

Milk would taste good. His stomach moved slightly inside him. He was hungry, too. Exercising heavily makes a guy hungry. Chocolate pie would be nice.

Voices arose, sounded louder, then faded, like the light. Sid was tired. He pictured his bed, soft, warm, familiar. He longed to lie in it, just as he had desired its comfort when he was studying late for exams or when he had worked hard detasseling.

The bed loomed up in his vision and drew him in. He pulled the covers over his tired legs. The bed was a little cold, and it moved, but he lay in it, sleepy. The pillow held the blond burr-cut head, and his fingers slipped down his body.

He stared into the darkness, asking himself why he couldn't breathe. Must be that he forgot to turn off the radiator and open the window in his room. Heck, why get out of bed when he was so comfortable?

Sid had never known this feeling of fatigue. It soothed, and yet it burned. But he couldn't move. The bed drifted. Soon he'd be asleep. Already he was dizzy.

He was happy. Punch drunk. "Crack" went something above him.

"Sid!"

"Shut up," he wanted to say. "Can't a guy get a little sleep?" He wanted to hit the sack and hit it hard . . . for a long time. The voice stopped.

"Damn!" Someone had opened the shades. The light was shining through the windows of his eyes. He would pay no attention.

Soon, it went black again.

"Falling asleep," he thought. "Thanks for shutting the blinds."

Sid did not know when he slept and when he woke. But then, no one does. At last the long, slim frame lay quiet.

A boy never knows when he goes to sleep.

—JOAN SKINNER '48
Bloomington High School
Lorraine Kraft, teacher

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